



*Spira by Slavish Feare doth Truth Deny
And sets his Trembling Hand to Popery*



*Spira by Slavish Feare doth Truth Deny
And sets his Trembling Hand to Popery*

A
RELATION
Of the fearful Estate
OF
FRANCIS SPIRA,

In the Year 1548.

Compiled by *Nath. Bacon Esq;*

Imprimatur, *Tho: Wykes, R. P.*
Decemb. 2. Episc. Lond. Cap.
1637. Domest.

L O N D O N,

Printed for the Widow *Harrh,*
in Maiden-Lane, 1688.

RELATION

Of the Central Estate



Compiled by John Brown Esq

Printed by J. W. & J. R. Esq
in the City of London

LONDON

Printed for the Widow Harris
in Maiden-Lane, 1683.

THE PREFACE.

For Truth of this History insuing besides Circumstances of Place, Person, Time, Occasion, so exactly observed, I refer my self to the Relation of those Godly Men, who in several Languages have manifested to the World the several passages thereof: and although I am not Ignorant; that at the first they were not only not credited, but also discredited and slandered, by such as found them to be a blur to the Roman Profession, yet they lost

The Preface.

not their lustre thereby; but being acquitted by many Compurgators of several Nations, and some of the Romish Religion, being all of them Spectators of this Tragedy, it occasioned not only a further manifestation and confirmation of the Truth, but also a large and more frequent confluence, to see that which they had formerly only heard of. This partly appeareth out of the succeeding Story: But more fully out of an Apology written by Vergerius, Bishop of Justinople, who was accused for dispersing the Fame of his Example

The Preface.

ample to the stain of Popery, in which Apology to N. Rotan, Suffragan of Padua, is shortly and plainly declared, what was said, what was done, and who were present. If that it be demanded, what moved me to compile this Treatise of Spira, tell them, that it should teach Fear and Reverence; and indeed among all those that came to see him, few or none return'd unshaken. Vergerius in his first Epistle saith, I would fain go see him again, but I exceedingly fear and tremble: and in his Apology saith, It is such a rare

The Preface.

Example as I would willingly go to the farthest parts of the World to hear or see the like. The Lady Jane to her Fathers Chaplain (that had fallen into Spira's Sin) saith, Remember the lamentable Estate of Spira. I acknowledge that there hath been formerly a Book published in English, on this Subject; but as far as I can learn (for I could not get one of them) it was not so various and large as this Treatise; and, as I have heard, a Translation of only one of the Tractates, whence in part I gather'd this Discourse. Concerning

The Preface.

ing my Care and Fidelity herein;
I may truly say, without
changing of Colour, That not
one Sentence of all this Work, at-
tributed to the Person of Spira,
but it hath its Varrant either
from the Epistles of Vergerius
and Gribauldus, Professors of
Law at Padua; or from the
Discourses of Henry Scringer
a Scotchman, Sigism. Gelons
a Transilvanian, and Mart.
Bocha a Divine of Basil:
I have taken no other liberty than
as a Relation, to weave the fore-
said Discourses together, so as
those who under several Writers
were accounted several, I here
A 5 make

The Preface

make one intire History, connected by due succession of time and occasion, as punctually as could be aimed at, by the Circumstances noted in the Writings of those holy and learned men before named,

N. B.

TO THE
AUTHOR and READER
OF THIS
HISTORY.

SOME scattered parcels of this Story lay,
in Foreign Papers, which hadst not found
Thus to collect, had } been an obvious prey,
Never seen the day.

Reader, would see how sinning against the
Will quench and leave the soul in a sad night
Of discontent? come hither Reader then look
And learn light-quenching sins to fear.

Reader, wouldst see the comfort-breathing
To grieve, what curless grief it doth de-
merit?

Come hither then, look here,
Here see a soul that is all despair; a man
All Hell; a Spirit all wound; who can
A wounded spirit bear?
Reader wouldst see (what mayst thou never
feel)

Despair.

Despair, Racks, Torments, Whips of Burning Steel;

Come then, look here!

Behold this Man, this Furnace in whose Heart

Sin hath Created Hells: Oh, in each part
What Flames appear?

His thoughts all stings, words, Swords, brimstone his breath.

His sight flames withes, curses Life, a death,
A thousand deaths live in him, he not dead,
A Breathing Course in living scalding lead:
And yet he lives our Monument to tell.

How black are quenched Lights;

Quencht joys are double frights.

Black days are double Nights.

Heaven tasted, lost, a double Hell.

I have called thee, Reader, pray so be,
Read this, that others read not thee.

Legas Historiam,

Et sua Historia.

M. N.

Extra-

Extraordinary Examples of
 Divine Justice, GOD
 never intended for
 nine days Wonder si else;
 would he, when he exemplified
 Lot's Wife have turned her into a
 Statue of melting Snow, nor
 of lasting Salt, which stood,
 as Josephus tell us, till his Age,
 after the Destruction of Jerusa-
 lem, and as some Travellers re-
 port, still at this day, *ut quoddam*
hominibus præstaret condimen-
tum, quo sapiant unde illud cobe-
tur exemplum: Aug. de Civit.
 Dei, lib. 16. cap. 30. for a season
 against Corruption, a Preservative
 against Apostasie. This Tragedy,
 when fresh and new, was the con-
 version and confirmation of sun-
 dry Worthies, *Vergerius*, a daily
 Spectator

Spectator thereof, forsaking a rich
Bishoprick of *Justinopolis*, and
tents of Antichrist, went to *Basil*,
and dyed a worthy Protestant:
many Nations had Eye-Wit-
nesses of their own Students
then in the University of *Padua*,
who penned the Story, the Co-
pies whereof are frequently re-
vived: our English ones were very
defective, and now worn out of
shop and hands; sundry Manu-
scripts of this abroad, imperfect;
which moved me to compare this
labour of a worthy Gentleman
(who faithfully translated it out
of *Italian, French, & Dutch Letters*)
with the *Latin* of *Celins Secundus*,
Curio, *Matthæus Gribauldus*,
professors of the Civil Law in *Pa-
dua*: *Sigismund Gelons a Transylva-
nian*, *Henricus Scotus*, all daily Vi-
sitors of *Spira*, and find it accord
with them. Touching *Spira's Per-
son*,

son, I find most learned Writers do incline to the right and hopeful hand; moved by his sweet, humble, and charitable speeches; some few desperate ones excepted, that fell from him in some little agonies, which kept him fasting and watching about six months space, eating nothing but what was forced down his throat. The sum of *Calvins* and *Borromus* their counsel is (who write largely of the use of this pattern) that all learn to take heed of backsliding, which Gods soul abhors, and not to dally with Conscience, an Hell on Earth, if justly incensed; more to be feared than the Spanish Inquisition, or all the Strapadoes and Torments in the world; and to take heed of *Spira's* principal Errors, which were to dispute with Satan over-busily in time of weakness,

ness, especially to Reason, and
conclude from present Sence to
Gods past Reprobation and future
Damnation; both which is hard,
if possible, for any Man to deter-
mine in his own, much more in
others Cases: So commending
thee to his Grace, who is able to
establish thee to the end, I bid thee
farewel, and hope well, while the
space of Grace lasteth: *Dum Spi-*
ritus spero; so mayest thou take
(good, and no hurt, by the read-
ing of this terrible Example.

backsliding, which Gods soul ab-
hors, and not to dally with
Conscience, as Hell on Earth, if
~~justly in mind, not to be fear-~~
ed than the Spanish Inquisition,
or all the Inquisitors and Tor-
ments in the world; and to take
heed of Spinas principal Errors,
which were so distant with Sa-

nels

A
RELATION

Of the Fearful Estate

OF
FRANCIS SPIRA.

IN the Year, 1548. when
the glorious Sun of the
Gospel was but newly ri-
sen in *Europe*, in the days
of the Reign of *Edward* the
Sixth of that Name, King of
ENGLAND, in the Ter-
ritory, and under the Juris-
diction of the City of *Ve-*
nice, being the very Border of
Italy, in the Town of *Cittadel-*
la, lived one *Francis Spira*, a
Civil

2 *A Relation of the Fearful*

Civil Lawyer, an Advocate of great Rank and Esteem, being of great Experience, of carriage circumspect and severe, his speech grave and composed, his countenance sharp and austere, every way befitting that Authority whereunto he was advanced; endow'd with outward blessings of Wife and eleven Children, and Wealth in abundance. What his worst parts were, I have no other warrant than his own Words, which (if not tainted overmuch with the bitterness of a desperate mind, and bearing a countenance rather of passion than of sober confession) may seem to add a period to all further commendations.

“I was (saith he) excessively covetous of Money, and accordingly applied my self to
“get

get by Injustice, corrupting Justice by deceit, inventing tricks to delude Justice; good causes I either defended deceitfully, or sold them to the adversary perfidiously; ill causes I maintained with all my might; I willingly opposed the known truth; and the trust committed unto me I either betrayed or perverted. Thus having worn out forty four years, or thereabouts, and the news of the new, or rather, newly revived Opinions of Luther coming into those parts, represented an object of Novelty unto him; who being as desirous to know, as he was famous for knowledg, suffered not these wandring Opinions to pass unexamined; but searching into the Scripture, and in-

4 *A Relation of the Fearful*

to all Books of Controversies that he could get. both old and new, and finding more than fame or opinion, he began to taste their Nature so well, as he entertains, loves and owns them at length; and with such Zeal, as he became a Professor, yea, a Teacher of them, first to his Wife, Children, and Family; and after to his Friends, and familiar Acquaintance, and in Comparison, seemed to neglect all other Affairs, intending ever to press this main Point, that *We must wholly, and only depend on the free and unchangeable Love of GOD in the Death of Christ, as the only sure way to Salvation:* and this was the Summ of all his Discourse, and this continued for the space of six Years or thereabouts, even so long as this Fire could keep it

Estate of Francis Spira. 5

it self within private Walls ;
but at length it brake forth
into publick Meetings, so as the
whole Province of *Padua* dawn-
ed by the lustre thereof. The
Clergy finding their trade of
the Pardons to decay, and their
Purgatory to wax cold, began
to bestir themselves : glossing
their Actions, first, with calum-
nious aspersions upon the whole
Profession ; then more plainly
striking at *Spira* with grievous
Accusation.

And to effect their purpose,
some promise Labour, others Fa-
vour, some Advice, others Main-
tenance ; all joyn to divide ei-
ther his Soul from his Body, or
both from God.

Now was *John Casp* the
Popes Legate, resident at *Ve-
nice,*

6 *A Relation of the Fearful*

nice, being by Birth a *Florentine*, and one that wanted neither Malice against those of this way, nor craftiness to effect his malicious Purposes; to him these men repair with out-cries against *Spira*, that he was the man that condemned the received Rites of the Church, deluded the Ecclesiastical Power, and scandalized the Policy thereof; one of no mean Rank, being a man of Account and Authority, and thereunto learned in the Scriptures, elegant in speech, and in one word, a dangerous *Lutheran*, having also many Disciples, and therefore not to be despised.

At this began the *Legate* to cast his eye on the terrible alteration that lately had happened in *Germany*; where, by the means

Estate of Francis Spira. 7

means of one only *Luther*, the Romish Religion had suffered such a blow, as that it could neither be cured by Diffimulation, nor defended by Power; but the Clergy must either mend their manners, or loose their dignities. On the other side, when he saw how propense the common people inhabiting in the bordering Country of *Italy*, were to entertain those new opinions, now thought it no time to dispute or perswade, but with speed repairs to the *Senate*, and procures authority from them to send to *Spira*.

Spira by this time had considered with himself of the nature of his courage, how evident and notorious it was, and therefore subject to be envied by such as neither liked his

8 *A Relation of the Fearful*

his Person nor Religion: he perceived that his Opinions were neither retired, nor speculative, but such as aimed at the overthrow of the *Romish* Faction, and a change of Policy; and that his Enemies wanted neither Power nor Occasion, to call him to an account in public, when he must either *Apostatize*, and shamefully give his former Life, yea his own Conscience the lie, or endure the utmost Malice of his deadly Enemies; or forsake his Wife, Children, Friends, Goods, Authority, yea, his dear Country and betake himself to a Foreign People, there to endure a thousand Miseries, that do continually wait upon a voluntary Exile.

Being thus distracted, and tossed in the restless Waves of doubt

doubt, without guide to trust to,
or Heaven to fly to for succour,
on the suddain, GOD's Spirit
assisting, he felt a calm, and began
to discourse with himself in this
manner:

'Why wandrest thou thus in
'uncertainties, unhappy man?
'cast away fear, put on thy
'shield, the shield of Faith: Where
'is thy wonted courage, thy
'goodness, thy constancy? re-
'member that Christ's glory lies
'at the stake: suffer thou with-
'out fear, and he will defend
'thee, he will tell thee what
'thou shalt answer; he can beat
'down all danger; bring thee out
'of Prison, raise thee from the
'dead: consider *Peter* in a Dun-
'geon, the Martyrs in the Fire;
'if thou mak'st a good Confession,
'thou mayest indeed go to Prison,
'or death, but an eternal reward

10 *A Relation of the Fearful*

'in Heaven remains for thee ;
 'What hast thou in this world
 'comparable to Eternal life ; to
 'Everlasting happiness ? if thou
 'dost otherwise, think of the scan-
 'dal ; (common people live by
 'example, thinking whatever is
 'done is well done) fear the loss of
 'peace and joy, fear hell, death
 'and eternal wrath ; or, if the
 'flesh be so strong, as to cause
 'thee to doubt of the issue, fly
 'thy Country, get thee away,
 'though never so far, rather than
 'deny the Lord of Life.

Now was *Spira* in reasonable
 quiet, being resolved to yield to
 these weighty Reasons. Yet hold-
 ing it wisdom to examine all
 things, he consults also with flesh
 and blood : thus the battle doth
 renew, and the flesh begins in this
 manner ; 'Be well advised, fond
 man, consider Reasons on both
 sides

Estate of Francis Spira. III

'sides, and then Judge: how canst
'thou thus overween thine own
'sufficiency, as thou neither regar-
'dest the examples of thy Progeni-
'tors, nor the Judgment of the
'whole Church? dost thou not
'consider what misery this thy
'rashness will bring thee unto?
'thou shalt lose all thy substance,
'gotten with so great Care and
'Travel, thou shalt undergo the
'most exquisite torments that
'Malice it self can devise, thou
'shalt be counted an Heretick of
'all, and to close up all, thou shalt
'die shamefully. What thinkest
'thou of the loathsome stinking
'dungeon, the bloody ax, the
'burning fagot? Are they delight-
'ful? Be wise at length, and keep
'thy life and honour; thou may'st
'live to do much good to good
'men, as God commands thee;
'thou mayest be an ornament to
B 2 thy

12 *A Relation to the Fearful*

thy Country, and put case
 the Countries loss would be of
 small esteem with thee, wilt
 thou bring thy friends also into
 danger? thou hast begotten Chil-
 dren, wilt thou now cut their
 throats, and inhumanly but-
 cher them, who may in time
 bring honour to their Country,
 glory to God, help and further-
 ance to his Church? go to the
 Legat, weak man, freely confess
 thy fault, and help all these mi-
 series. Thus did the cares of
 this World, and the deceitfulness
 of Riches, choak the good Seed
 that was formerly sown: so as
 fearing, he faints, and yields unto
 the allurements of this present
 world; and being thus blinded
 he goes to the Legat at Venice,
 and salutes him with this
 news.

*Having for these divers years en-
 tertained*

tertain'd an opinion concerning some Articles of faith, contrary to the Orthodox and received Judgment of the Church, and uttered many things against the authority of the Church of Rome, and the universal Bishop, I humbly acknowledg my fault and error, and my folly in misleading others; I therefore yield myself in all obedience to the Supreme Bishop into the bosom of the Church of Rome, never to depart again from the Traditions and Decrees of the holy See; I am heartily sorry for what is past, and I humbly beg pardon for so great an offence.

The Legat perceiving Spira to faint, he pursues to the utmost; he causes a recitation of all his Errors to be drawn in Writing together with the Confession annexed to it. And commands Spira to subscribe his name there,

14 *A Relation of the Fearful*

which accordingly he did; then the *Legate* commands him to return to his own Town, and there to declare this Confession of his, and to acknowledge the whole Doctrine of the Church of *Rome*, to be holy, and true, and to abjure the Opinions of *Luther*, and other such Teachers, as false and Heretical: 'Man knows the beginning of sin, but who bounds the issue thereof?' *Spira* having once lost footing, goes down a main, he cannot stay, nor gain-say the *Legate*, but promiſeth to accomplish his whole will and pleasure: he soon ad-dresseth himself for his Journey: and being onward in the way, bethinks himself of the large spoils he had brought away, from the conflict with the *Legate*; what glorious testimony he had given of his great

Estate of Francis Spira. 15

great Faith and Constancy in
Christ's cause; and to be
plain, how impiously he had
denied Christ, and his Gospel
at *Venice*; and what he pro-
mised to do further in his own
Country: and thus, partly
with fear, and partly with
shame, being confounded, he
thought he heard a voyce
speaking unto him, in this man-
ner!

Spira, What dost thou here?
whither goest thou, hast thou,
unhappy man, given thy hand-
writing to the Legate, at *Venice*?
yet see thou dost not seal it in
thy own Country. Dost thou
indeed think eternal Life so
mean, as that thou preferrest
this present life before it? dost
thou well in preferring Wife
and Children before Christ? is
the windy applause of the peo-
ple,

16 *A Relation of the Fearful*

'ple, better indeed than the glo-
 'ry of God? and the Possession of
 'this Worlds good more dear
 'to thee, than the salvation of
 'thine own soul? is the small use
 'of a moment of time more desi-
 'rable, than eternal wrath is
 'dreadful? think with thy self,
 'what Christ endured for thy
 'sake, is it not equal thou shouldst
 'suffer somewhat for him? Re-
 'member man, that the sufferings
 'of this present life are not com-
 'parable to the glory that shall
 'be revealed. If thou sufferest
 'with him, thou shalt also reign
 'with him: thou canst not an-
 'swer for what thou hast already
 'done; nevertheless the gate of
 'Mercy is not quite shut. Take
 'heed that thou heapest not sin
 'upon sin, least thou repent when
 'it will be too late.

Now was *Spira* in a Wilder-
 ness

ness of doubt, not knowing which way to turn him, nor what to do; yet being arrived in his own Country, and amongst his friends, considering what he had done, and what he had further promised to do, and how the terror of God on the one side, and the terror of this World on the other side, did continually rack him; and therefore he desired of them advice in this so doubtful a case: His friends, upon small deliberation answered, that it was requisite he should take heed that he did not in any wise betray his wife and children, and all his friends, into danger: seeing, that by so small a matter as the reciting of a little Schedule, which might be done in less space than half an hour, he might both

B 5 free

18 *A Relation of the Fearful*

free himself from present danger, and preserve many that depend upon him; adding moreover that he could get no credit in relenting from that which he had already in greatest part performed before the *Legate* at *Venice*, and that in the perfect accomplishing thereof, little or no discredit could arise, more than what by the former action already he had sustained; on the other side, if he did not perform his promise made to the *Legate*, he could neither discharge himself of the shame which he had already incurred, nor avoid far more heavy and insupportable injuries, than probably he should have endured if he had persisted obstinately in his former Opinions.

This

This was the last Blow of the battle; and *Spira* utterly overcome, goes to the Prætor, and profers to perform his promise made to the *Legate*, who in the mean time, had taken order to have all things read, and had sent the instrument of Abjuration signed by *Spira*, to the Prætor, by the hands of a certain Priest. All that night the miserable man wears out with restless cares, without any minute of rest; the next morning being come, he gets up, and being ready, he desperately enters into the publick Congregation, where Mass being finished, in the presence of Friends and Enemies, and of the whole Assembly, being by estimation near two thousand people, yea, and of Heaven it self, he recites that

20. *A Relation of the Fearful*

that infamous Abjuration, word for word as it was written : it being done, he was fined at thirty pieces of gold, which he presently paid, five whereof were given to the Priest that brought the abjuration, the other twenty five were imployed towards the making of a Shrine to put the *Eucharist* in; then was he sent home, restored to his Dignities, Goods, Wife, and Children : No sooner was he departed, but he thought he heard a dreadful voice, saying to him, ' Thou wicked wretch, thou hast denied me, thou hast renounced the covenant of thy obedience, thou hast broken thy vow; hence Apostate, bear with thee the sentence of thy eternal damnation; he trembling and quaking in body and mind, fell down in a swoond :

swound : relief was at hand for the body, but from that time forward he never found any peace or ease of mind, but continuing in uncessant torments, he protested that he was captivated under the revenging hand of the great God, and he heard continually that fearful sentence of Christ that just Judge, that he knew he was utterly undone; that he could neither hope for Grace, nor Christ's Intercession with God the Father in his behalf : thus was his fault ever heavy on his heart, and ever his Judgment before his eyes.

Now began his friends, some of them, to repent too late of their rash counsel : others not looking so high as the Judgment of God, laid all the blame on his Melancho-
ly

ly constitution; that overshadowing his Judgment, wrought in him a kind of madness: every one censured as his fancy led him, yet for remedy all agreed in this to use both the wholesome help of Physicians, and the pious advice of Divines, and therefore thought it meet to convey him to Padua, an University of note, where plenty of all manner of means was to be had: this they accordingly did; both with his Wife, Children, and whole Family: others also of his Friends accompanying him, and being arrived at the House of one James Ardin, in Saint Leonards Parish, they sent for three Physicians of most note, who upon the observations of the Effects, and of other Symptoms of his Disease, and
some

some private Conference one with another, amongst themselves returned their Verdict in this manner, *viz.* That they could not discern that his Body was afflicted with any danger or distemper originally from it self, by reason of the overruling of any Humour; but that this Malady of his did arise from some Grief or Passion of his Mind, which being over-burdened did so oppress the Spirits, as they wanting free passage, stirred up many ill Humours, whereof the Body of Man is full, and these ascending up into the Brain, troubled the Fancy, shadowed the Seat of the Judgment, and so corrupted it. This was the State of his Disease, and that outward part that was visible to the Eye of Nature; this they

24 *A Relation of the Fearful.*

they endeavoured to reform by Purgation, either to consume, or at least to divert the course of those Humours from the Brain; but all their Skill effected nothing; which *Spira* noting, said, 'Alas poor Men! how far wide are you? do you think that this Disease is to be Cured by Potions? believe me, there must be another manner of Medicine, it is neither Plaister nor Drugs that can help a fainting Soul cast down with the Sence of Sin, and the Wrath of God; 'tis only Christ that must be the Physician, and the Gospel the Souls Antidote.

The Physicians easily believed him, after they had understood the whole truth of

the

the matter, and therefore they wished him to seek some spiritual Comfort. By this time the Fame of this Man was spread over all *Padua*, and the neighbouring Country; partly for that he was a Man of Esteem; partly because as the Disease, so the occasion was especially remarkable; for this was not done in a Corner; so as daily there came multitudes of all sorts to see him; some out of Curiosity, only to see and discourse; some out of a pious desire to try all means that might reduce him to Comfort again: or at least to benefit themselves by such a Spectacle of Misery, and of the Justice of God. Amongst these *Paulus Vergerius* Bishop of *Justinopolis* and *Matthews Gribaudus* deserve especially to be

26 *A Relation of the Fearful*

be named as the most principal Labourers for this Mans Comfort. They find him now about fifty years of Age, neither affected with the Dotage of old Age, nor with the unconstant head-strong Passion of Youth, but in the Strength of his Experience and Judgment; in a burning Heat, calling excessively for Drink, yet his Understanding active, quick of Apprehension, witty in Discourse above his ordinary manner, and judiciously apposite: his Friends laboured with him by all fair means to receive some nourishment, which he obstinately gain-saying, they forcibly infused some Liquid sustenance into his Mouth, most of which he spit out again, exceedingly chafing, and in this fretting mood of his, said,

said, ' As it is true that all
' things work for the best to
' those that love God : so to
' the wicked all are contrary :
' for whereas a plentiful Off-
' spring is the Blessing of God,
' and his reward, being a stay
' to the weak Estate of their aged
' Parents, to me they are a cause
' of bitterness and vexation ;
' they do strive to make me tire
' out this Misery ; I would fain
' be at an end ; I deserve not
' this dealing at their Hands ;
' Oh ! that I were gone from
' hence, that some body would
' let out this weary Soul.

His Friends saluted him, and
asked him, what he conceived
to be the cause of his Disease ;
forthwith he brake out into a
lamentable Discourse of the
Passages formerly related, and
that

that with such passionate Elocution, that he caused many to weep, and most to tremble. They contrarily, to comfort him propounded many of God's Promises recorded in the Scripture, and many Examples of God's Mercy: 'My Sin (said he) is greater than 'the Mercy of God. Nay answered they, The Mercy of God is above all Sin; God would have 'all Men to be saved; It's true ' (quoth he) he would have all that ' he hath elected to be saved; he ' would not have damned Reprobates to be saved: I am one of ' that number, I know it, for I ' willingly and against my knowledge denied Christ, and I feel ' that he hardens, and will not ' suffer me to hope.

After some silence one asked him, whether he did not believe

believe that Doctrine to be true,
for which he was accused be-
fore the *Legate*? He answered
'I did believe it when I denied
'it, but now I neither believe
'that, nor the Doctrine of the Ro-
'man Church: I believe nothing,
'I have no Faith, no trust, no hope;
'I am a Reprobate like *Cain* or
'*Judas*, who casting away all hope
'of Mercy, fell into despair; and
'my Friends do me great wrong,
'that they suffer me not to go to
'the place of Unbelievers, as I
'justly deserve.

Here they began sharply to
rebuke him; requiring, and
charging him, that in any wise
he did not violate the Mercy of
God, to which he answered;
'The Mercy of God is exceed-
'ing large, and extends to all
'the Elect, but not to me, or any
'like

30 *A Relation of the Fearful*

'like to me, who are sealed up
 'to Wrath; I tell you I deserve it,
 'my own Conscience condemns
 'me, what needeth any other
 'Judge? Christ came (say they)
 to take away Sin, *Rom. 2. 15.* and
 calling for a Book, they read un-
 to him the Passion of Christ; and
 coming to his nailing to the
 Cross, *Spira* said, 'This indeed
 'is comfortable to such as are
 'Elected, but as for me Wretch,
 'they are nothing but grief and
 'torment, because I contemned
 'them. Thus roaring for grief,
 and tossing himself up and
 down upon the Bed as he lay,
 he entreated them to read no
 more. As *Gribauldus* was com-
 ing to see him, *Vergerius* said
 to *Spira*, Dear Sir, here is Do-
 ctor *Gribauldus*, a godly and
 faithful friend of yours, come
 to see you. He is welcome
 (said

(said he) but he shall find me ill: *Gribauldus* replied, Sir, This is but an illusion of the Devil, who doth what he can to vex you; but turn you to God with your whole Heart, and he is ready to shew you Mercy; the Lord you know is full of Mercy, it is he that hath said, *that as often as a Sinner repents of his Sin, he will remember his Sin no more.* Consider this in the Example of *Peter*, that was Christ's familiar, and an Apostle, and yet denied him thrice with an Oath, and yet God was Merciful unto him: Consider the Thief that spent his whole Life in Wickedness, and for all that did not God graciously respect him in the last Minute of his Life? Is the Lord's Hand now shortned that it cannot save? To this *Spira* answered: If

32 *A Relation of the Fearful*

' If *Peter* grieved and repented,
 ' it was because Christ beheld him
 ' with a Merciful Eye : and in
 ' that he was pardoned, it was
 ' not because he wept, but be-
 ' cause God was gracious to him ;
 ' but God respects not me, and
 ' therefore I am a Reprobate ; I
 ' feel no Comfort can enter into
 ' my Heart ; there's place there
 ' only for torments and vexings
 ' of Spirit ; I tell you my case is
 ' properly mine own, no Man
 ' was ever in the like Plight, and
 ' therefore my Estate is fearful.
 Then roaring out in the bit-
 terness of his Spirit, he said, *It's*
a fearful thing to fall into the
Hands of the Living God ; the vio-
 lence of his Passion and Action
 suitable, did amaze many of
 the Beholders ; insomuch as
 some of them said with a
 whispering voice, that he was
 possessed

possessed; he over-hearing it,
said, 'Do ye doubt it? I have a
'whole legion of Devils that take
'up their dwelling within me,
'and possess me as their own;
'and justly too, for I have denied
'Christ. Whether did you that
willingly or not? (said they.)
'That's nothing to the purpose
'(said *Spira*) Christ saith, whoso-
'ever denies me before men, him
'will I deny before my Father
'which is in Heaven; Christ
'will not be denied, no not in a
'word; and therefore it is enough,
'though in heart I never denied
'him.

They observing his distemper
arise from the sense and horror of
the pains of Hell, asked him whe-
ther he thought there were worse
pains than what he endured for
the present? he said, That he knew
'there were far worse pains than

C

'those

34 *A Relation of the Fearful*

' those that he then suffered, for
 ' the wicked shall rise to their
 ' judgment, but they shall not
 ' stand in judgment, (*Psal. 1.*)
 ' this I tremble to think of, yet
 ' do I desire nothing more than
 ' that I might come to that place
 ' where I may be sure to feel the
 ' worst, and to be freed from fear
 ' of worse to come.

I, but you are to consider (said
 one) that those Opinions for
 which you were accused before
 the *Legate*, were impious, and
 therefore you are not to think
 you denied Christ, but rather
 that you confessed him, acknow-
 ledging the infallible truth of
 the Catholick Church. ' Truly
 ' said he) when I did deny those
 ' Opinions, I did think them
 ' to be true, and yet I did deny
 ' them.

Go to (said others) now
 then

then believe that they are true;
' Now I cannot (said he) God
' will not suffer me to believe
' them, nor trust in his Mercy;
' what would you have me to
' do? I would fain attain to this
' power, but cannot, though I
' should presently be burnt for
' it. But why do you (said the
other) esteem this so grievous a
sin, when as the learned *Leges*
constrained you to it; which
he surely would not have done;
' if your former Opinions had
not been Erroneous? No, good
Francis, the Devil besets thee;
let not therefore the grievous-
ness of thy sin (if any such
be) amaze thee. You say right
(replied he) the Devil hath
posselt me, and God hath left
me to his power; for I find
I can neither believe the Gos-
pel, nor trust in God's Mercy,

36 *A Relation of the Fearful*

I have sinned against the Holy
 Ghost, and God by his immuta-
 ble decree hath bound me over
 to perpetual punishment with-
 out any hope of pardon. It's true
 that the greatness of sin, nor the
 multitude of them, bind not
 God's Mercy; all those sins that
 in the former part of my life I
 have committed, then did not
 so much trouble me, for I trust-
 ed God would not lay them to
 my charge: now having sin'd a-
 gainst the Holy Ghost, God hath
 taken away from me all power
 of repentance, and brings all my
 sins to remembrance; and guilty
 of one, guilty of all. And there-
 fore it is no matter whether my
 sins be great or small, few or ma-
 ny; they be such as Christ's blood
 nor God's Mercy belongs not
 to me: God will have Mercy on
 whom he will have Mercy; and
 whom

whom he will he hardneth;
this it is that gnaws my heart,
he hath hardned me; and I
find that he daily more and
more doth harden me, and
therefore I am out of hope; I
feel it, therefore cannot but
despair: I tell you there was ne-
ver such a Monster as I am, ne-
ver was any man alive a spectacle
of such exceeding misery. I know
that justification is to be expe-
cted by Christ, and I denied and
abjured it, to the end I might
keep this frail life from adver-
sity, and my children from po-
verty: and now behold how
bitter this life is to me, and God
only knows what shall become
of this my Family; but sure no
good is likely to betide it, but
worse and worse, and such a
ruin at length, as one stone
shall not be left upon another.

38 *A Relation of the Fearful*

But why should you (said Gri-
banger) conceit so deeply of
your sin; seeing you cannot but
know, that many have denied
Christ, yet never fell into De-
spair? Well (said he) I can see
no ground of comfort for
such; neither can I warrant
them from God's revenging
hand in wrath, though it plea-
seth God yet to suffer such to
be in peace: and besides, there
will a time of danger come, and
then they shall be thorowly
tried; and if it were not so, yet
God is just in making me an
Example to others, and I cannot
justly complain; there is no
punishment so great but I have
deserved it, for this so heinous
offence. I assure you it is no
small matter to deny Christ,
and yet it is more ordinary than
commonly men do conceive of
it,

it, it is not a denial made before a
Magistrate as it is with me. For
as oft as a Christian doth dis-
semble the known truth, as of-
ten as he approves of false wor-
ship by presenting himself at it;
so often as he doth not things
worthy of his calling, or doth
such things as are unworthy of
his calling: so often he denies
Christ; thus did I, and therefore
am justly punished for it. Your
Estate (quoth *Gribauldus*) is not
so strange as you make it: *Job*
was so far gone, that he com-
plained, God had set him as a
mark against him; and *David*
that was a man after God's own
heart, complained often that
God had forsaken him, and was
become his Enemy; yet both
received comfort again. Com-
fort your self therefore, God
will come at length, though

40 *A Relation of the Fearful*

he now seem far off.

‘ O Brother (answered *Spira*) I
‘ believe all this, the Devils be-
‘ lieve and tremble; but *David*
‘ was ever Elected and dearly be-
‘ loved of God; and though he
‘ fell, yet God took not utterly a-
‘ way his holy Spirit, and there-
‘ fore was heard when he prayed,
Lord take not thy Holy Spirit
from me: ‘ but I am in another
‘ case, being ever accursed from
‘ the presence of God; neither can
‘ I pray as he did, because his holy
‘ Spirit is quite gone, and cannot
‘ be recalled; and therefore I know
‘ I shall live in continual hardness
‘ so long as I live. Oh! that I might
‘ feel but the least sense of the love
‘ of God to me, though but for
‘ one small moment, as I now feel
‘ his heavy wrath that burns like
‘ torments of Hell within me, and
‘ afflicts my conscience with pangs
unuttera-

“unutterable: verily Desperati-
“on is Hell it self.

Here *Gribauldus* said, I do ve-
rily believe, *Spira*, that God
having so severely chastised you
in this life, correcteth you in
Mercy here, that he may spare
you hereafter, and that he hath
Mercy sealed up for you in time
to come.

“Nay (said *Spira*) hence do I
“know that I am a Reprobate, be-
“cause he afflicteth me with hard-
“ness of heart: O that my body
“had suffered all my life long, so
“that he would be pleased to re-
“lease my soul, and ease my consci-
“ence, this burdened conscience.

Gribauldus being desirous to
ease his mind from the conti-
nual meditation of his sins;
as also to sound how far the
present he stood affected to the
Romish Church, asked him

142 *A Relation of the Fearful*

what he thought became of the
souls of men so soon as they de-
parted out of the body, to which
he answered:

Although this be not so fully
revealed in Scripture, yet I veri-
tably believe that the souls of the
Elect go presently to the King-
dom of glory, and not that they
sleep with the body, as some do
I imagine.

Very well, said one of the Spe-
ctators, Why do the Scriptures
then say (1 Sam. 5. 9.) that God
brings down to Hell, and raiseth
up, seeing it cannot be meant
of the estate of the soul after
death, which as thou sayest ei-
ther goeth to Heaven without
change, or to Hell without Re-
demption; It must be under-
stood of the Estate of the soul
in this life, like that wherein
thou art at this present, and
often

often times we see that God suffers men to fall into the jaws of Despair, and yet raiseth them up again; and therefore despair not, but hope; it shall be even thus with thee in his good time.

‘ This is the work (quoth Spira)
 ‘ this is the labour; for I tell you,
 ‘ when I at *Venice* did first abjure
 ‘ my profession, and so, as it were,
 ‘ drew an Indenture, the Spirit of
 ‘ God often admonished me; and
 ‘ when at *Cittadella* I did as it
 ‘ were set my seal, the Spirit
 ‘ of God often suggested to me, do
 ‘ not write, *Spira*, do not seal: yet I
 ‘ resisted the holy Ghost, and did
 ‘ both, and at that very present I
 ‘ did evidently feel a wound in-
 ‘ flicted in my very Will: so that
 ‘ though I can say, I would believe,
 ‘ yet can I not say, I will believe.
 ‘ God hath denied me the power
 of

44 *A Relation of the Fearful*

'of will, and it befalls me in this
 'my miserable Estate, as with one
 'that is fast in Irons, and his
 'friends coming to see him, do
 'pitty his Estate, and do perswade
 'him to shake off his fetters, and
 'to come out of his bonds, which
 'God knows he would fain do,
 'but cannot; this is my very case,
 'you perswade me to believe, how
 'fain would I do it, but cannot,
 'O now I cannot. Then violent-
 ly grasping his hands toge-
 ther, and raising himself up,
 'Behold (saith he) I am strong,
 'yet by little and little I decay and
 'consume, and my servants would
 'fain preserve this weary life,
 'but at length the will of God
 'must be done, and I shall perish
 'miserably, as I deserve: Rejoyce
 'ye righteous in the Lord, blessed
 'are you whose hearts the Lord
 'hath mollified.

Then

Then after some Pause, 'It's
'wonderful, I earnestly desire to
'pray to God with my Heart,
'yet I cannot; I see my dam-
'nation, and, I know my reme-
'dy is only in Christ, yet I can-
'not set my self to take hold on
'it; such are the Punishments of
'the Damned; they repent of
'their loss of Heaven, they can-
'not mend their ways.

As he was thus speaking, he
observed divers Flies that came
about him, and some lighted on
him; 'Behold (said he,) now al-
'so *Belzebub* comes to his Ban-
'quet; you shall shortly see my
'End, and in me an example to
'many, of the Justice and Judg-
'ment of God.

About this time came in
two Bishops, with divers Scho-

46 *A Relation of the Fearful*

Scholars of the University, one of them being *Paulus Vergerius*, having observed *Spira* more than any other, being continually conversant with him, told him his Estate was such as rather stood in need of Prayer than Advice; and therefore desired him to pray with him in the Lords Prayer: *Spira* consented, and he began;

[*Our Father which art in Heaven*] when breaking forth into tears, he stopped; but they said, it is well, your grief is a good sign; I bewail (said he) my misery; if I perceive I am forsaken of God, and cannot call to him from my Heart, as I was wont to do. Yet let us go on, said *Vergerius*.

[*Thy Kingdom come*] O Lord (said *Spira*) bring me also into this Kingdom; I beseech thee
-o-102 that

Shut me not out, Then coming to those words [*Give us this day our daily Bread*] he added, O Lord, I have enough, and abundance to feed this Carcass of mine; but there is another bread I humbly beg, the Bread of thy Grace, without which I know I am but a dead Man.

[*Lead us not into temptation*] seeing Lord, that I am brought into temptation, help me; Lord, that I may escape; the Enemy hath overcome; help me, I beseech thee, to overcome this cruel Tyrant.

These things he spake with a mournful Voice, the tears trickling down abundantly; and expressing such affections and passion, as turned the Bowels of those there present with grief and compunction: they then turning to Spira, said, You know

48 *A Relation of the Fearful*

know that none can call *Christ Jesus* the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost, you must therefore think of your self, according to that soft affection, which you express in your Prayers, inferring thereby that God hath not wholly cast you off, or bereaved you of his Spirit utterly.

‘I perceive, said *Spira*, that I call on him to my eternal Damnation, for I tell you again, It is a new and unheard of example, that you find in me. If *Judas* (said they) had but outlived his days, which by nature he might have done, he might have repented, and Christ would have received him to Mercy; and yet he sinned most grievously against his Master, which did so esteem of him, as to honour him with the dignity of an Apostle, and did maintain
and

and feed him. He answered, Christ did also feed and honour me, neither yet is my fault one jot less than that of his, because it is no more honour to be personally present with Christ in the Flesh, than to be in his Presence now by illumination of his holy Spirit: and besides, I deny that ever *Judas* could have repented how long soever he had lived: for Grace was quite taken from him, as it is now from me.

O *Spira*, said they, You know you are in a spiritual desertation, you must therefore not believe what Satan suggests, he was ever a liar from the beginning, and a meer Impostor, and will cast a thousand lying fancies into your Mind, to beguile you withal, you must rather believe

50 *A Relation of the Fearful*

lieve those whom you judg to be in a good Estate, and more able to discern of you than your self: believe us, and we tell you, That God will be Merciful unto you.

There is the knot (said *Spirita*) would I could believe, but I cannot.

Then he began to reckon up what fearful Dreams and Visions he was continually troubled withal: that he saw the Devils come flocking into the Chamber, and about his Bed, terrifying him with strange Noises; that these were not fancies, but that he saw them as really as the standers by: and that besides these outward terrors, he felt continually a racking torture of his Mind, and a continual Butchery of his Conscience, being the very proper pangs

pangs of the damned Weights in Hell.

Cast away these Fancies, (said *Griboaldus*) these are but illusions: humble your self in the Presence of God, and praise him. The dead praise not the Lord (answered he) nor they that go down into the Pit. We that are drowned in Despair are dead, and already gone down into the Pit; what hell can there be worse than Desperation, or what greater Punishment? The gnawing Worm, Unquenchable Fire,, horreur, confusion and (which is worse than all) Desperations it self continually tortures me, and now I account my present Estate worse, than if my Soul separated from my Body were with *Judas*, and the rest of the damned, and therefore, now
' desire

‘ desire rather to be there, than
 ‘ thus to live in the Body.

One being present, repeated
 certain words out of the Psalms;
 ‘ If thy Children forsake my Law
 ‘ and walk not in my Judgments;
 ‘ I will visit their transgressions,
 ‘ with Rods, and their iniquity
 ‘ with Stripes; nevertheless my
 ‘ loving kindness I will not ut-
 ‘ terly take from them, nor suffer
 ‘ my faithfulness to fail. Mark
 this, O *Spira*, My Covenant I will
 not break.

‘ These Promises (said *Spira*)
 ‘ belong only to the Elect,
 ‘ which if tempted, may fall in-
 ‘ to Sin, but are again lifted up
 ‘ and recovered out: as the
 ‘ Prophet saith, Though he fall
 ‘ he shall not be utterly cast
 ‘ down, for the Lord uphold-
 ‘ eth him, therefore *Peter* could
 ‘ rise, for he was elected; but
 ‘ the

the Reprobate when they fall,
cannot rise again, as appears in
Cain, Saul, and Judas, God deals
one way with the Elect, and ano-
ther with Reprobates.

The next day he prayed with
them in the *Latin* Tongue, and
that with excellent affection, as
outwardly appeared. Blessed be
God, said *Vergerius*, these are
no signs of eternal Reprobation:
you must not, O *Spira*, seek out
the secret Councils of God's E-
lection and Reprobations; for no
man can know, so long as he
lives, whether by his good or
bad deeds, he be worthy of
Gods love or anger: do you not
know that the Prophet *David*
complained, that God had cast
off his soul?

I know all this, quoth *Spira*, I
know the mercies of God are infi-
nite, and do surpass the sins of the
whole

54 *A Relation of the Fearful*

whole world. and that they are
 effectual to all that believe, but
 this faith, and this hope is the
 gift of God: O that he would give
 it me ! but it is as impossible as
 to drink up the Sea at a draught:
 as for that of *Solomon*, if he had
 ever tasted that which I feel by
 woful experience, he would ne-
 ver have spoken as he did : but
 the truth is, never had mortal
 man such an evident experience
 of God's anger and hatred against
 him, as I have. You that are in
 good estate, think Repentance &
 Faith to be a work of great faci-
 lity : and therefore you think it
 an easy matter to perswade men
 to believe : the whole need not
 the Physician, and he that is well
 can soon give counsel to such as
 are ill : but this is the Hell to me,
 my heart is hardned, I cannot be-
 lieve ; Many are called, but few
 are chosen.

Upon

Upon what ground (said they) do you conceive so ill an opinion of your self?

'I once did know God to be my Father, not only by Creation, but by Regeneration; I knew him by his beloved Son, the Author, and finisher of our Salvation; I could pray to him, and hope for pardon of sin from him; I had a taste of his sweetness, peace, and comfort; now contrarily, I know God, not as a Father, but as an Enemy: what more? my heart hates God, and seeks to get above him, I have nothing else to fly to but Terror and Despair.

Belike you think then (said they) that those who have the earnest and first fruits of God's Spirit, may notwithstanding fall away.

The judgments of God are a deep

56 *A Relation of the Fearful*

deep Abyſs, ſaid he, we are ſoon drowned if we enter into them; He that thinketh he ſtandeth, let him take heed leſt he fall, as for my ſelf, I know I am fallen back, and that I once did know the truth, though it may not be ſo thoroughly; I know not what to ſay, but that I am one of that number which God hath threatened to tear in pieces.

Say not ſo, answered they, for God may come, though at the laſt hour; keep hold therefore at the laſt by Hope.

This, quoth he, is my caſe; I tell you I cannot, God hath deprived me of Hope, this brings terrour to my mind, and pines this body which now is ſo weak, as it cannot perform the ſeveral Offices thereof: for as the Elect have the Spirit teſtifying that they are the ſons of
God

God, so the Reprobates, even while they live do often feel a worm in their consciences, whereby they are condemned already: and therefore as I perceived this wound inflicted on my mind and will, I knew that I wanted the gifts of saving grace, and that I was utterly undone. God chasteneth his Children with temporary afflictions, that they may come as Gold out of the fire; but punisheth the wicked with blindness in their understandings, and hardness of heart; and wo be to such from whom God takes his holy Spirit.

Here one rebuked him, and told him he gave too much credit to sense, that he was not to believe himself, but rather him that was in a good estate; And I testifie to you (saide he) that God will be merciful to you.

D

‘Nay

58 *A Relation of the Fearful*

Nay answered he, for because
 I am in this ill Estate, therefore
 can I believe nothing but what
 is contrary to my Salvation and
 Comfort; but you that are so con-
 fident of your good Estate, look
 that it be true, for it is no such
 small matter to be assured of sin-
 cerity: a Man had need be exceed-
 ing strongly grounded in the
 truth before he can be able to
 affirm such a matter as ye now
 do. It's not the performance of
 a few formal duties; but a mighty
 constant labour, with all intention
 of heart and affection, with full
 desire and endeavour continual-
 ly to set forth God's Glory; there
 must be neither fear of Lega-
 tors, Inquisitors, Prisons, nor any
 death whatsoever; many think
 themselves happy, that are not; it
 is not every one that saith Lord,
 Lord, that shall go to Heaven.

They

They came another day, and found him with his Eyes shut, as if he had been drowfie and very loath to Discourse; at which time there came in also a grave Man from *Cittadella*, who demanded of *Spira*, if he knew him or not? He lifting up his Eye-lids, and not suddenly remembering him, the Man said to him, *I am Presbyter Antonio Fontania*, I was with you at *Venice*, some 8 Weeks since; O cursed day said *Spira*! Oh cursed day! Oh that I had never gone thither! Would God I had then died!

Afterwards came in a Priest, called *Bernardus Sardonius*, bringing with him a Book of Exorcisms to conjure this Devil; whom when *Spira* saw, making his Head he said.

‘I am verily perswaded indeed
D 2 that

60 *A Relation of the Fearful*

‘that God hath left me to the
‘power of the Devil: but such
‘they are, as are not to be found
‘in your Letany; neither will
‘they be cast out by spells. The
Priest proceeding in his intended
purposes, with a strange and un-
couth gesture, and a loud voice
adjured the spirit to come into
Spira's tongue, and to answer:
Spira deriding his fruitless la-
bour, with a sigh, turned from
him: a Bishop being there pre-
sent, said to *Spira*, brother, God
hath put virtue into the Word
and Sacraments; and we have us-
ed the one means and find not
that effect which we desire; shall
we try the efficacy of the Sacra-
ments? surely if you take it as
a true Christian ought to receive
the Body and Blood of Christ, it
will prove a sovereign medicine
for your sick Soul.

‘This

' This I cannot do (answered
' he) for those that have no right
' to the Promises, have no right
' to the Seals. The Eucharist was
' appointed only for believers, if
' we have no faith, we eat & drink
' judgment to our selves. I receiv'd
' it about a month since, but I
' did not well in so doing; for I
' took it by constraint, and so I
' took it to my deeper Condem-
' nation.

Here *Vergerius* began to importune him earnestly to, beware that he did not wilfully resist grace, and put himself out of Heaven, charging him vehemently, by all the love that was between them, by the love that he bare to his children, yea to his own Soul, that he would set himself seriously to return to that Faith and Hope, which once he had

62 *A Relation of the Fearful*

in the Death of Christ; with many such like words. *Spira* having heard much of the like matter formerly, and being somewhat moved said, You do but repeat *Vergerius*, what should I hope? why should I believe? God hath taken Faith from me; shew me then whither I shall go, shew me a Heaven, whereto I shall retire. You tell me of God's Mercy, when as God hath cast me off, you tell me of Christ's Intercession, I have denied him; you command me to believe, I say, I cannot; you bring me no comfort, your Command is as impossible for me to obey, as to keep Moral Law: if you should perswade one to love God with all his Heart, Soul and Strength, and God gives him not Power, can he perform your Desire? Doth not the Church teach us to Sing; 'Direct

rect us, O Lord, to keep thy Com-
 mandments? Hypocrites say they
 love God with all their Heart,
 but they lie; for my part I will
 not lie, but tell you plainly, such
 is my case, that tho' you should
 never so much importune me to
 hope or believe, though I desire
 it yet I cannot, for God as a pu-
 nishment of my wickedness hath
 taken away from me all his sa-
 ving graces, Faith, Hope, and all:
 I am not the Man therefore that
 you take me for: Belike you think
 I delight in this Estate; if I could
 conceive but the least spark of
 hope of a better Estate hereafter,
 I would not refuse to endure the
 most heavy weight of the wrath
 of that great God, yea for
 20000 years, so that I might at
 length attain to the end of that
 Misery, which I now know will
 be Eternal; But I tell you, my will

64. *A Relation of the Fearful*

is wounded, who longs more to believe than I do? But all the ground-work of hope is gone, for if the Testimonies of the holy Scripture be true (as they are certainly true) is not this as true, Whosoever denies me before men, him saith Christ will I deny before my Father which is in Heaven? is not this justly my case as if it had been intended against this very person of mine? And I pray you what shall become of such as Christ denieth, seeing there is no other name under Heaven whereby you look to be saved? What saith St. Paul to the *Hebrews*? It is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were partakers of the holy Ghost, if they fall away, to be renewed to repentance: what can be more plain
against

against me? is not that Scripture also; if we sin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, but a looking for of judgment: the Scripture speaks of me, *St. Paul* meets me, *Saint Peter* tells me, it had been better I had never known the way of Righteousness, than after I have known it, to turn from the holy Commandment; it had been better I had not known, and yet then my condemnation had been most certain; do you not see evidently, that I have wilfully denied the known truth? I may justly expect not only damnation, but worse if worse may be imagined. God will have me undergo the just punishment of my sin, and make me an Example of his Wrath for your sakes.

The Company present admired his Discourse, so grievously accusing himself of his forepast Life, so gravely and wisely dilating concerning the Judgments of God, that they then were convinced, that it was not Frenzy or Madnes that had possessed him, and being as it were in admiration of his Estate, *Spira* proceeded again in this manner. 'Take heed to your selves, it is no light or easie matter to be a Christian; it is not Baptism, nor reading of the Scriptures, or boasting of Faith in Christ, (though even these are good) that can prove one to be an absolute Christian: you know what I said before, There must be a Conformity in Life, A Christian must be strong, unconquerable, not carrying an

an obscure Profession, but resolve, expressing the Image of Christ, and holding out against all opposition to the last Breath; he must give all Diligence, by Righteousness and Holiness, to make his Calling and Election sure. Many there are that snatch at the Promises in the Gospel, as if they undoubtedly did belong to them, and yet they remain sluggish, and careless; and being flattered by the things of this present World, they pass in their course in quietness and security, as if they were the only happy Men; whom nevertheless the Lord in his Providence hath ordained to eternal Wrath, as you may see in Saint *Luke's* Rich Man. Thus it was with me, therefore take ye heed.

Them

Then came one of his Nephews, and offered him some sustenance, which he disdainfully refusing, so moved the young mans Choler, that he charged him with hypocrisie and dissimulation, or frenzy; to whom *Spira*, gravely answering said.

You may interpret the matter as you will: but I am sure I am not only the Actor, but the Argument and matter of the Tragedy; I would it were frenzy either feigned or true, for if it were feigned frenzy I could put it off at pleasure; If it were a real frenzy, yet there were some hope left of Gods mercy, whereas now there is none. For I know God has pronounced me an enemy and guilty of high treason against his Majesty; I am a cast-away, a vessel of his wrath: yet dare

dare you call it dissembling and frenzy? and can you mock at the formidable example of the heavy Wrath of God, that should teach you fear and terror? But it is natural to the flesh, either out of malice or ignorance, to speak perversly of the works of God. The natural man discerneth not the things that be of God, because they are spiritually discerned.

How can this be (saith *Grihaule*) that you can thus excellently discourse of the judgment of God, and of the graces of his holy Spirit; What you find the want of them, and earnestly desire them; and yet you think you are utterly deprived of them?

Take this for certain, (saith he) want the main grace of all, and that which is absolute necessary; and God doth many times extort
most

'most true and strange testimo-
 'nies of his Majesty, Justice and
 'Mercy; yea out of the mouths
 'of very Reprobates: for even Ju-
 'das, after he had betrayed his
 'Master was constrain'd to confess
 'his Sin, and to justify the Inno-
 'cency of Christ, therefore if I do
 'the like, it is no new or strange
 'matter. God hath taken Faith
 'from me, and left me other com-
 'mon Gifts, for my deeper Con-
 'demnation: By how much the
 'more I remember what I had, and
 'hear others discourse of what
 'they have, by so much the more
 'is my Torment, in that I know
 'what I want, and how there is
 'no way to be relieved.

Thus spake he, the Tears all
 the while trickling down; pro-
 fessing that his Pangs were such,
 as that the damned Wights in
 Hell endure not the like Misery;
 that

that his Estate was worse than that of Cain or Judas, and therefore he desired to die. *Behold* (said he) *the Scriptures are accomplished in me, They shall desire to die, and death shall fly from them.* And verily he seemed exceedingly to fear, least his Life should be drawn out yet longer; finding no ease or rest, ever and anon, cried out, *O miserable Wretch, O miserable Wretch,* then turning to the Company, he besought them in this manner.

O Brethren! take a diligent heed to your life; make more account of the gifts of Gods Spirit than I have done; learn to beware of my misery; think not you are assur'd Christians, because you understand something of the Gospel; take heed you grow not secure on that ground; be constant and immoveable in the maintenance of

72 *A Relation of the Fearful*

of your profession: Confess even until death, if you be called there-to; he that loveth Father and Mother, brothers, sisters, sons, daughters, kindreds, houses, lands, more than Christ, is not worthy of him.

These words (said they) do not sound like the words of a wicked Reprobate.

I do but here imitate (saith *Spira*) the rich glutton in the Gospel, who tho in Hell was careful that his brethren should not come to that place of torment: And I say to you brethren, Take heed of this miserable estate wherein I am.

Then turning himself to certain young men that were present, he desired them to conceive him aright. 'I do not speak this to derogate from the certainty of saving Faith, and the Promises of the Gospel, for they

they are most sure; but take heed of relying on that Faith that works not a holy and unblameable life, worthy of a believer; credit me, It will fail, I have tried it. I presumed I had gotten the right Faith; I preached it to others, I had all places of Scripture in memory that might support it, I thought my self sure, and in the mean time living impiously and carelessly; behold now the judgment of God hath overtaken me, not to correction, but to condemnation: and now you would have me to believe, but it will not be, for I feel too late that good things belong only to such as are good, whose sins are covered with Christ's death and blood, as with a veil, and guarded with his righteous Merits

' Merits from the flood of God's
 ' Wrath, even as with a mighty
 ' Wall, lest miserable Mortals
 ' should be swallowed up with
 ' the greatness of their Sin: but as
 ' for me, I have, as it were wil-
 ' fully with my Hands, pulled
 ' down this Rampire, behind
 ' which I might have rested in
 ' safety; and now are the swelling
 ' Waters come even to my Soul;
 ' and I am cast away.

One of his familiar Friends
 chanced to say, That cer-
 tainly he was overcome with Me-
 lancholy which being overheard,
 Spira answered;

' Well, be it so, seeing you will
 ' needs have it so; thus also i Gods
 ' Wrath manifested against me, in
 ' that he hath taken from me the
 ' use of my Understanding and
 ' Reason, so as I can neither rightly
 ' esteem and judg of my distemper,
 nor

nor hope of Remedy. You see Brethren what a dangerous thing it is to stop or stay in things that concern Gods glory, especially to dissemble upon any terms: What a fearful thing is it to be near and almost a Christian? never was the like example to this of mine, and therefore if you be wise, you will seriously consider thereof: O that God would let loose his Hand from me that it were with me now as in times past, I would scorn all threats of the most cruel Tyrants, bear Torments with invincible resolution, and glory in the outward Profession of Christ, till I were choaked in the flame, and my Body consumed to Ashes.

You say, you are desperate; O *Spira*! (said they) why then do you not strive with some Weapon or other, violently to make an end of your Life, as despe-

desperate men use to do? 'Le-
 'me have a sword (said Spira.)
 Why what would you do with
 it (quoth they?) 'I cannot tell
 'you (said he) what this mind
 'would move me to, upon occasi-
 'on, nor what I would do.

III They perceiving small effect of
 all this their labour, but rather
 that he grew worse, for the a-
 voiding of concourse of people,
 for every day seldom fewer than
 twenty continued with him, and
 to stop the course of fame which
 was continually blown abroad
 of him, they consult to carry
 him back again into his own
 Country; and those his friends
 that came to comfort him, be-
 gan to take their leaves of him;
Verginius amongst the rest, re-
 quired that at their parting
 they might pray together with
 him.

him. *Spira* hardly consented, and as unwillingly performed, for he said, 'My heart is estranged from God, I cannot call him Father from my heart; all good motions are now quite gone, my heart is full of malediction, hatred, and blasphemy against God: I find I grow more and more hardned in heart, and cannot stop nor help my self; your prayers for me shall turn to your own profit, they can do me no good.

Vergerius came to take his leave of him, whom *Spira* embracing, said, 'Although I know that nothing can bring any benefit to me a Reprobate; but that every thing shall tend to my deeper condemnation; yet I give you most hearty thanks for your kind office of the love and good will; and the Lord return it unto you

79 *A Relation of the Fearful*

'you, with a plentiful increase
'of all good.

The next day being brought down to his intended journey, by the way looking round about him with a ghastly Look, he saw a Knife lying on a Table, to which he running hastily snatched hold of it, as intending to mischief himself; but his Friends laying hold of him, stopp'd him in his purpose: whereupon with Indignation he said, *I would I were above God, for I know he will have no Mercy on me.*

This went he homewards, often saying, that he envied the Condition of *Cain* and *Judas*: He lay about eight Weeks in this case, in a continual burning, neither desiring, nor receiving any thing but by force, and that without digestion, so spent that he appeared a perfect Anatomy, expressing

pressing to the view nothing but
Sinews and Bones: vehemently
raging for Drink, ever pining, yet
fearful to live long; dreadful of
Hell, yet coveting Death; in a
continual Torment, yet his own
Tormentor, And thus consuming
himself with grief and horror, im-
patience and despair, like a living
Man in Hell, he represented an
extraordinary example of the Ju-
stice and Power of God. And thus
(as far as appeareth) within a few
days after his arrival at his own
home, he departed this present
Life. Yet an occasion to make
us remember, *That secret things*
belong unto the Lord our God, but
Charity to Man to teach him to
hope all things.

F I N I S.